

A History of Tabernacle Baptist Church

by Rev. Tony Brewington



Rev. Nash Locklear

The packhouse scene established for itself a very natural and beneficial role in Robeson County life. Few farms existed without the little building to the rear of the homestead magnified with the sweet aroma of cured tobacco. Sometimes the fun and laughter associated with the activities around the packhouse were replaced by the singing of hymns, praying and preaching when the packhouse became a place not for work, but for worship.

In 1947 a group of people including Mr. Leander Chavis, Mr. Taff Lowry, Mr. Mack Locklear, Mrs. Effie Ann Locklear and others gathered in a packhouse on the Balcum Farm just off the Moss Neck Road. Several of those who gathered for these services had come from another Baptist church to establish a congregation in this area. A church was organized through the help and leadership of Rev. R. W. Maynor and Rev. Rufus Burns and became known as Tabernacle Baptist Church.

These weekly worshippers soon wanted a church facility and began a campaign to locate an adequate site. At this point during the year 1949, Mr. Lester Bullard of the Prospect Community gave approximately one acre of land adjacent to highway #711. Quickly work began to construct the new facility. Soon after the foundation was completed, however, construction ceased for some reason and was delayed for a long period of time. A tent was erected near the construction site and services were held here.

It was in this tent that a traveling white family stopped one evening to attend the services. This family, the Darnells, were so impressed with the need and sincerity of the congregation that they decided to remain in the community to help raise funds and to offer their services in construction. Their efforts kept

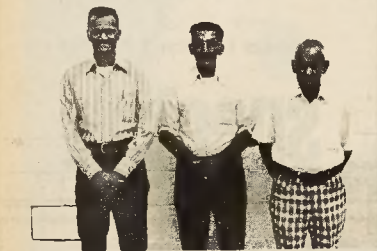
them in the area for about one year before moving on. During this time Rev. John L. Locklear provided much assistance toward raising money for construction costs through his store in Pembroke. Finally, in 1953 the building was completed. October 15, during the same year, Tabernacle Baptist joined the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association.

Since competition, the church facility has undergone additional construction. In 1963 the pastor, Rev. King Maynor, encouraged remodeling the facility adding classrooms, a nursery and modern furniture for the sanctuary. Additional renewal has been made during the pastorate of Rev. Nash Locklear.

Pastors serving the congregation following Rev. R. W. Maynor have included the following: Rev. R. B. Jacobs, Rev. James E. Oxendine, Rev. John David Brewington, Rev. John L. Locklear, Rev. Z. R. Chavis, Rev. Douglas Mitchell, Rev. King Maynor, and Rev. Nash Locklear. The church has sent out Rev. Tommy Hagans and Rev. Kelly Sanderson as ministers.

There are approximately 104 members at Tabernacle with a Sunday School enrollment of 178. The oldest member is Mrs. Effie Ann Locklear and the youngest Sunday School member is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hunt. The present deacons are Mr. James W. Chavis, chairman; Mr. Taff Lowry; Mr. James T. Woodell; and Mr. Lacy Locklear.

Tabernacle Baptist Church is located on Highway #711 about five miles east of Pembroke. The congregation is a very active and loving group and welcome the opportunity for service. We are indebted to Mrs. Mable Locklear for much of the above information.



Lacy Locklear, Taff Lowry, James T. Woodell and James W. Chavis (not pictured)



Tabernacle Baptist Church

Attend the Church of your choice this Sunday.

Up From Dust & Darkness

By Lew Barton - 3rd Century Artist

IN RETROSPECT

I look back over the past 30 years of Indian development in southeastern North Carolina with nostalgia and pride. Strange, and wonderful, how many marvelous changes can take place on behalf of a people, such as the Indians of Robeson and adjacent counties of North and South Carolina within a mere three decades of time! It is awesome to recall, also, how many bad things have happened during that brief (historically speaking) stretch of time.

In 1947 when Ms. Mary Livemore and I attempted to put together on the campus of Pembroke State College (now University) a local historical organization, there was so much apathy, negativism and defeatism pervading the Indian community, we managed to interest only some half-a-dozen Indian students on the all-Indian campus. People looked at you with a ho-hum expression and blandly asked "What for?" when we suggested the possibility of Indians studying and recording their own history. We'd been told by others we were nothing so often, we'd begun to believe it of ourselves. Ninety-five percent of everything that had ever been written about us was strictly of the diatribe variety of expression. Hell, I fumed after reading Mary C. Norment's 1874 account of our people, nobody can be all bad!

The swear word notwithstanding, missionary Mary Livemore agreed. She reiterated, in effect, that this was one of the specific reasons why Indians should do their own research and record their own facts. After all, who else cared enough to take the pains?

She did and she prodded me into hard work, endless leg work as I sifted through colonial records, old census reports, tombstone epitaphs and dates, land grants and deeds, etc. etc., ad infinitum. She told me, in effect, that buried underneath or immersed in all this material was the real truth about my people. Again and again she repeated, "Lew, your people have a glorious heritage. Search it out for yourself."

I did. My first article on local Indian history was published in that same year. Four years later, in 1951, something like a dozen of my local history articles appeared in the 80th Anniversary Historical Edition of *The Robesonian*. But I'd just begun, and before those articles could go to press, I was blind.

While learning Braille, how to travel with a cane and myriad other things that had to be re-learned at the Butner School for the Blind, I wrote my serialized book, *Story of A Robeson Indian*, or something like the first half of it. The local historical material still running through my mind, crept into my work again and again.

I was impatient with my own progress. Keenly realizing more than ever my need for additional formal education, I chafed to be back in college where I'd already completed one year of credits. Naturally, my counselors told me I wanted to walk before I'd yet learned to crawl, but I wouldn't listen. I finally prevailed with Dick Napier of the State Commission for the Blind and he tacked with the late Dr. Herbert G. Oxendine of Pembroke State about my capabilities. Dr. Oxendine, having had me as a student, had faith in my ability to persevere. He told Dick Napier frankly that I could do it if I would.

Later, I began to doubt myself. Who did I think I was, Superman? I hadn't even learned to travel well! I'm still the world's poorest traveler. This stuff you hear about blind people acquiring extra senses to compensate for the loss of their vision, just isn't so, or at least it didn't happen to me that way. As Ray Charles puts it, "The only thing wrong with being blind is that you can't see." And any fully sighted person who doesn't believe that, just ought to try blindfolding himself for a single day!

We have read and heard so much propaganda about blind people within recent years, it has come to be accepted as the truth. These articles which attempt to show that "a blind person can do anything a sighted person can," are invariably written by sighted people. Usually, they are written by or for the people who are entrusted with the care and training of the blind. They are interested mainly in making themselves look good to the public, and some of them have PR men hired for that purpose. At public expense. Somewhere, somehow along the line, true representation of the blind is lost. Too often, programs for the blind wind up becoming programs to serve the sighted people who run them. That is hard. But it is fair and it is true. Make no mistake about it. The blind is exploited as well as helped. And usually, when a blind complains publicly, he "gets in bad" with those who hold power of life and death over him. Only the blind person who has learned to function independently dares to tell you the whole truth about his treatment, or mistreatment, as the case may be. He is the most deprived, depressed and dependent person on the face of the earth, and he knows it. He does not dare bite the hand through which he is fed. I could get down to specifics, but I won't, not here. Suffice it to say that within recent years, we have taken the blind man off the street and swept him under the rug.

Blind people of unusual intellectual ability manage to succeed and to compete in the world of the sighted. But the average blind person is not an individual of unusual intellectual ability, at least in no greater degree than are the sighted. He or she is an average Joe or Jane, just that and nothing more.

The blind person of extraordinary ability is an impatient person, a demanding person at times. He is like a Cadillac idling in neutral gear with no driver at the wheel and nowhere to go. He is bursting with mental energy that necessarily must be frustrated in large measure. People "kindly" sit him on a street corner to await their return, at which time they fully intend to help him on his way to his destination. But almost as often as not, he is forgotten, literally, to sit there lost and alone.

John Milton, the English poet who wrote such masterpieces as *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, was so demanding of his children and other relatives that they eventually came to dislike him intensely. Yet he was driven by inner creative forces that could tolerate no restraints. In his poem on his blindness, he writes, "Does God demand day labor of me, daylight denied?" Or words to that effect. Yes, certain things are required of us all, sighted and unsighted. And creative people can only be happy doing what they feel is required of them. They must create, or shrivel up and waste away.

Are there actually people who will take advantage of the blind? Only the naive assume that there aren't. "There are people in this world," my father used to tell me, "who will rob a blind tumblebug and put him on the wrong road home."

The fact is, any human being is open to exploitation. But the average blind person is the easiest mark of all.

77TH BIRTHDAY

OBSERVED

Mr. Dannie Locklear of the Hopewell Community celebrated his 77th birthday Sunday, July 25, 1977. He was honored with a dinner at his home. Those attending were Mrs. Mary Alice Woodell, Mrs. Lula Oxendine, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Oxendine, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Dean Oxendine, Mrs. Helen Campbell and daughter of Alexandria, Virginia, Denise Stanton of Alexandria, Virginia, Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Locklear, Mrs. Nancy Jacobs, Mr. and Mrs. Romuel Strickland, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Locklear, Mrs. Judy Locklear, Mrs. Peggy Hunt and Pamela Locklear of the home.



Mr. Dannie Locklear and family.

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Lions Club Officers Announced



Officers of the Pembroke Lions Club for 1977-78, installed by Past District Governor John W. Gardner of Lumberton, are from left to right: seated, Vincent Lowry, treasurer; Robert McGirt, president; John H. Sampson, first vice president; Neal Graham, second vice president; standing: Welton Lowry, tail twister; Robert Collins, director; Hartley Oxendine, lion tamer; John W. Gardner, officiating officer; Woodrow Sampson, retiring president and director; and Governor R. Barnes, secretary. Elmer W. Hunt was installed as 3rd Vice president. He is not pictured because he had to make the photograph.



Lady Lion officers shown above are: left to right, Mrs. Mary Sue McGirt, first vice president; Mrs. Deborah Sampson, president; Mrs. Molly H. Sampson, secretary-treasurer; and Mrs. Fanny Locklear, not pictured, tail twister. (Elmer W. Hunt photo)

The Pembroke Lions and Lady Lions held their joint banquet session at the Town and Country Restaurant in Pembroke Monday evening featuring installation of officers for both organizations.

Past District Governor John W. Gardner of Lumberton was the installing officer of the evening.

Luther Hodges, Jr. unannounced candidate for the U.S. Senate, was the keynote speaker. He was introduced by Linwood Rich, President of Fairmont Chamber of Commerce.

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